Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

PAGE 01 USUN N 01875 180600 Z

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ACTION SS-15

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E. O. 11652: N/ A
TAGS: OPERATIONS CENTER FOR SECRETARY' S PARTY OVIP
(ROGERS WILLIAM P)
SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES SUMMARY MAY 18

THE OPENING OF THE SENATE WATERGATE HEARINGS WITH THREE- COLUMN PICTURES OF THE PROCEEDINGS DOMINATED PAGE ONE OF THE NEW YORK TIMES MAY 18. THE TWO COLUMN HEADLINE, " HEARING IS TOLD THAT MAGRUDER HAD FILE MOVED" BEGAN A LENGTHY ACCOUNT OF TESTIMONY BY PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OFFICIAL ROBERT ODLE ABOUT THE BACKGROUND PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF THE DRAMA. ANOTHER HEADLINE CALLED IT A " LOW- KEY BEGINNING" AND VOLUMINOUS REPORTING INSIDE CONCENTRATED ESSENTIALLY ON DETAILS. THE PAPER' S LEAD EDITORIAL HOWEVER ANALYZED WHITE HOUSE WIRE- TAPPING MOTIVES WITH A BROAD BRUSH, SECONDED BY COLUMNIST TOM WICKER. COLUMNIST JAMES RESTON CONCENTRATED ON THE EFFECT OF THE WHITE HOUSE " SYSTEM" IN PARTICULAR RELATION TO HELMS AND KISSINGER.

AS REPORTED BY THE TIMES, THE PRINCIPAL DEFELOPMENTS OF THE DAY WERE THESE:

1) MAGRUDER ORDERED A FILE WHICH APPARENTLY CONTAINED POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE REMOVED FROM HIS DESK HOURS AFTER THE WATERGATE BURGLARY, ACCORDING TO TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE. SO FAR AS IS KNOWN THE DOCUMENTS CONTAINED IN IT HAVE NEVER BEEN FOUND BY INVESTIGATORS,

2) RICHARDSON ISSUED A DETAILED SET OF GUIDELINES FOR WHOMEVER IS CHOSEN AS SPECIAL WATERGATE PROSECUTOR.
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 USUN N 01875 180600 Z

RICHARDSON SAID THE PROSECUTOR WOULD BE GIVEN " FULL AUTHORITY FOR INVESTIGATING AND PROSECUTING OFFENSES AGAINST THE UNITED STATES " ARISING OUT OF THE WATERGATE BURGLARY, AND THAT HE WOULD ALSO HANDLE " ALL OFFENSES ARISING OUT OF THE

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

1972 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION".

3) IN AN AFFIDAVIT MADE PUBLIC TODAY, GENERAL WALTERS SAID THAT L. PATRICK GRAY TOLD HIM ALMOST A YEAR AGO HE HAD RECOMMENDED THAT ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN WATERGATE SHOULD BE DISCHARGED. GEN. WALTERS SAID GRAY TOLD HIM HE WAS PREPARED TO RESIGN OVER APPARENT WHITE HOUSE EFFORTS TO IMPLICATE THE CIA AND THE FBI IN COVERING UP THE WATERGATE OPERATION.

4) UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE CASEY SAID HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY WRONGDOING IN THE SEC' S HANDLING OF A FRAUD CASE AGAINST VESCO WHEN CASEY WAS SEC CHAIRMAN. IN A STATEMENT QUOTED BY UPI DATELINED WASHINGTON, CASEY SAID HE HAD NO INTENTION OF RESIGNING FROM THE DEPARTMENT. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD BEEN AWARE OF THE SEC INVESTIGATION OF VESCO, BUT THAT HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE THAT $250,000 INVOLVED IN THE CASE WAS ACTUALLY AN UNREPORTED CONTRIBUTION TO NIXON' S RE- ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

IN A LEAD EDITORIAL HEADED " WEB OF SUSPICION", THE TIMES COMMENTED: " WHITE HOUSE ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT THE PRESIDENT ORDERED WIRETAPS ON THIRTEEN NATIONAL SECURITY AIDES AND FOUR NEWSMEN -- REPORTEDLY AT THE PERSONAL INSTIGATION OF HENRY KISSINGER IN SOME CASES -- OFFERS FURTHER DISMAYING EVIDENCE OF THE DEGREE TO WHICH INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH ITSELF HAVE BEEN COMPROMISED UNDER THE CLIMATE OF SELF- RIGHTEOUS SECRECY AND SUSPICION IN WHICH THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS OPERATED...."

THE EDITORIAL CONTINUED: " AS HAS SO OFTEN PROVED THE CASE WITH THIS AND PREVIOUS ADMINIESTRATIONS, THE SECRECY THAT THE WHITE HOUSE SOUGHT TO IMPOSE THROUGH HIGHLY DUBIOUS MEANS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN AIMED MORE AT PRESERVING ITS OWN INTERESTS THAN THE NATIONAL INTEREST". TOM WICKER WROTE: " THERE IS NO ACCEPTABLE EXPLANATION EVEN OF THE BEGINNINGS OF THIS SORDID WHITE HOUSE PRACTICE OF SPYING ON ITS OWN
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 USUN N 01875 180600 Z

EMPLOYES AND ON REPUTABLE NEWS REPORTERS ... THIS DIRTY BUSINESS TELLS MUCH -- PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY WITNESS SO FAR -- ABOUT HOW THE CHAIN OF ' WATERGATE' EVENTS COULD HAVE HAPPENED".

RESTON, UNDER THE HEADING " KISSINGER AND HELMS" HAD THIS TO SAY ABOUT THE " DON' T CALL ME" CLOSED- CIRCUIT SYSTEM IN THE WHITE HOUSE: " HOW COULD MR. KISSINGER AGREE TO BUGGING HIS OWN FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES ON THE NSC STAFF IN THE WHITE HOUSE, IT IS ASKED. AND HOW COULD RICHARD HELMS, FORMER HEAD OF THE CIA, ALLOW THE AGENCY TO BE USED IN A DOMESTIC CONSPIRACY, WITHOUT CHALLENGING THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF AND EXPRESSING HIS DOUBTS AND OBJECTIONS DIRECTLY TO THE PRESIDENT?...

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

" ONE HAS TO BE VERY CAREFUL WITH THIS DISCUSSION OF POWER,
AMBITION, LOYALTY AND MORALITY. IT INVOLVES DELICATE
MOTIVES AND PRIVATE PHILOSOPHIES AND CALCULATIONS NO
OUTSIDER CAN POSSIBLY KNOW. FOR EXAMPLE, BEFORE HE LEFT
WASHINGTON FOR PARIS TO TRY TO SAVE THE VIETNAM
PEACE AGREEMENT, MR. KISSINGER MADE CLEAR TO GENERAL HAIG
AND OTHERS IN THE WHITE HOUSE -- ONE SOURCE SAYD ALSO TO THE
PRESIDENT PERSONALLY -- THAT IF HIS MORAL AUTHORITY WAS IN
QUESTION AS A RESULT OF HIS PART IN THE TELEPHONE BUGS OF
HIS OWN STAFF, THEN HE WOULD RESIGN AT ONCE ...

" THERE ARE NO RULES THAT SAY KISSINGER AND HELMS CANNOT DEFY
THE SYSTEM AND INSIST ON CONFRONTING THE PRESIDENT, BUT
IT IS HARD TO REMEMBER A MAN AROUND WASHINGTON IN THE
LAST GENERATION WHO WALKED INTO THE OVAL ROOM OF THE WHITE
HOUSE AND CHALLENGED THE PRESIDENT, HIS POLICIES AND
HIS STAFF....

" IT TAKES A BOLD MAN TO TELL THE PRESIDENT AND HIS STAFF THE
TRUTH, NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HURTS. AND THIS MR. NIXON
HAS DISCOURAGED FROM THE TIME HE WALKED INTO THE WHITE HOUSE".

THE TIMES CARRIED ON PAGE TWO WIRE STORIES DATELINED BOGOTA
AND LIMA ABOUT SECRETARY ROGERS' TRIP. THE BOGOTA STORY
FROM AP EMPHASIZED STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN COLOMBIA
AND FROM LIMA REUTER REPORTED THAT THE SECRETARY CONFIRMED
PRESIDENT NIXON PLANNED TO VISIT LATIN AMERICA LATE THIS
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YEAR OR EARLY NEXT.
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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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